1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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of earning money to pay tax, together with such subsidiary measures as the prohibition of Native smelting, and the pressure on men to clothe themselves in imported clothing, ensured that the old order changed beyond the mere loss of sovereignty. Not only were links established with Southern Rhodesia and later with other parts of Africa, but new patterns of distribution of wealth and power were set up which were incompatible with the old order. The chief who stayed at home ruling his people found himself outclassed by the newly returned labourers from the south, with their display of clothes, money and urban mannerisms. The relationships between one tribe and another which formerly had found expression in fighting had now to find other expressions, and began to be based on different interests.

These general considerations applied throughout North-Eastern Rhodesia. In Ngoniland local variation was supplied more by the presence of the North Charterland than by the fact that the Ngoni had been defeated in war. The North Charterland was interested in the economic development of its concession, whereas the Administration had to consider the needs of other territories governed by the B.S.A. Company, particularly Southern Rhodesia. The same administrative policy was applied to the Ngoni as to neighbouring tribes which had not been conquered by force of arms. Nevertheless in Ngoni eyes the Administration discriminated against Ngoni in favour of Cewa. Many Cewa who had been captured shortly before 1898 moved away from Ngoniland after the war, or at least moved in the direction of their homeland. With the end of Ngoni raiding the no-man's-land round Ngoni country filled up again with Cewa who had been displaced when the Ngoni first arrived in the 1870s. Cewa chiefdoms were re-established and recognized by the Administration, to the chagrin of the Ngoni.

Even the Ngoni themselves were referred to by the Administration as the 'Angoni-Chewa' by way of emphasizing their mixed ethnic composition. When the Native Reserve scheme was put forward in 1913 the Ngoni chiefs objected to the Cewa being allotted land of their own, and suggested that all the tribes of the district should be placed in one reserve under Mpezeni II. The Administration did not agree. When villages were moved into the proposed reserves in the 1920s, a few more villages left Ngoniland for Cewa country. At the same time other villages moved into Ngoniland from other chiefdoms in the face of alienation of land or difficulties with the Portuguese Administration. Thus to-day many villages in Ngoniland are of Cewa origin and many villages in Cewa chiefdoms are of Ngoni origin.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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inefficient workers on the local tobacco farms, where the ties that link them to the near-by villages with their marriages, funerals, and beer parties are still operative, and where the wages are much lower than in Southern Rhodesia. Secondly, Ngoni tend to suspect the good intentions of any non-African, however lavish he may be with his presents, and for this reason are reluctant to enter into agreements with them the social consequences of which they cannot foresee.

2. *Rivals of the Paramount Chief*

In pre-conquest times the death of the head of the State was followed by a struggle between rival heirs and by fission of the State. Under British colonial rule these struggles cannot be carried on by force of arms, and it is difficult to split the tribe when there is nowhere for the dissident section to move to and when Administrative recognition is an important condition for political existence. Nevertheless the same struggles continue even if in a different guise.

One of the most interesting incidents in the struggles between rival groups for the chiefdomship occurred in 1903 and hinged on an aspect of segmentation within the residential system which we have not so far discussed. It was customary for the heir to a large segment founded by his father to place one wife in the headquarters of that segment as well as establishing his levies of wives with their own inferior segments. The eldest son of the selected wife grew up to be in charge of the headquarters and came to be identified with his father's father, the founder of the headquarters, as against his father who was lord of its segment. Thus, for example, Zwangendaba, heir to segment 1, founded segment 18 for his own great wife, but also placed one of his wives in the headquarters of segment 1, the segment founded by his father for *his* great wife. Similarly Mpezeni, as son of Zwangendaba, placed one of his wives in the headquarters of segment 4, which by then had replaced the annihilated segment 18. In this manner the Ngoni seem to have differed from the Zulu, for among them, according to Bryant, the *isi-zinda*, son of the placed wife, represents his own father as against the father's main heir.[1]

In 1903 the eldest son of Mpezeni I by the selected wife in segment 4 tried to assume the name of his father's father, Zwangendaba. This was in accord with his structural position as representing the interests of the founder of the segment as against those of the

[1] Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 80; Bryant, *Dictionary*, s.v. *isi-zinda*; cf. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 402. Lancaster implies that the selected wife was called *Inkosi*. This seems unlikely in view of the Zulu use of *iNkosikazi* for the senior (left-hand) wife.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

divination are not well developed among the Ngoni as means of influencing action. The attempt to establish a new county failed for lack of Administrative support. Chiefs still continue to express their rivalries through sorcery, and would-be chiefs still attempt to establish new counties.

When Mpezeni II died, his heir was still young and was out of the country at boarding-school. A minor chief, after quarrelling with one of the dead chief's lieutenants about the funeral arrangements, proposed that the heir should remain at school to finish his education and that meanwhile there should be a regency. However the Administration arranged for the immediate return of the heir.

The rivalry between the Paramount Chief and his minor chiefs shows itself in other less dramatic ways. Thus the Paramount Chief's advisers told me that all cases coming on appeal from the courts of minor chiefs were heard in the Paramount Chief's own court of first instance, and that only if the verdict given there was not accepted was the case referred to the Appeal Court which was held at the administrative centre of the Paramount Chief's county every month. The minor chief's and their advisers told me that cases sent on appeal from them went direct to the Native Appeal Court, and emphasized that this court was composed of several minor chiefs and their councillors, called upon in rotation. In practice, as I observed in the course of my work, sometimes one procedure was followed, sometimes the other.

On the other hand, the minor chiefs and other politically important people support the Paramount Chief in his relations with the Administration. When recently Ngoni thought that the Administration was not treating the Paramount Chief with the respect due to his position, two minor chiefs endeavoured to organize a petition to the Administration on the matter. When the Paramount Chief's deputy was put in prison by the Administration for embezzlement, it was a minor chief who protested most strongly to the Administration. However dissatisfied the minor chiefs and people may be with any particular Paramount Chief, there is little dissatisfaction with the Paramount Chiefdainship. This is still the feature of their organization which in Ngoni eyes most clearly marks them off from their neighbours, and which most clearly links them in their present lowly condition to the exploits of their illustrious forefathers.

3. *The chief's advisers*

The men who advise the chief, who enjoy his confidence and his hospitality, belong to a number of different categories. In each

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
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696 In the court itself the magnitude of the penalties imposed and damages awarded is to some extent at the discretion of the court, and political considerations, among others, may influence judgments. Adultery with the wife of a chief is more heavily punished than ordinary adultery, and people from other tribes, particularly the Yao, are discriminated against. Ngoni courts maintain that they recognize only Ngoni law, even though the disputants may belong to other tribes. These ideas are familiar enough, but they indicate that questions of group membership, that is, political affiliation, and relations between groups, do influence the actions of the court. Within a county, hostility between a group having the ear of the court and one lacking it may find expression in procedural obstructions, such as always hearing a particular suit at the end of a day, or of continually postponing the hearing because some minor witness is absent.

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The chief and his advisers usually endeavour to maintain a monopoly of access to the Administration, and this endeavour is largely supported by the Administration as a matter of policy. In the particular sphere of legal action, appeal from the Native Court to the District Officer is sometimes regarded as a challenge to this monopoly, and litigants are sometimes punished for stating that they intend to appeal. In a celebrated recent case when a chief was successfully sued in the District Commissioner's court for damages for adultery, his people came to him afterwards to express their condolences, as after a funeral, at the injury done to his high office by this procedure.

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Native Courts are formally recognized under Ordinance by the Administration, and hence changes in the indigenous legal system brought about by the Administration are legal changes, in that they have behind them all the paraphernalia of Ordinances, Letters Patent, Orders-in-Council, and Acts of the United Kingdom Parliament. This gives a special quality to manipulation of the legal system by the Administration, for this is really only another way of saying that effective sovereignty lies with the British Crown and not with Paramount Chief Mpezeni. But within the framework of analysis of the local situation, the actions of the Administration and of the chiefs in controlling the working of the courts are comparable sociologically.

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The Administration is continually exercised about the quality of the work done in Native Courts, and in so far as all cases heard in Native Courts are subject to revision by the District Commissioner a direct check is, or could be, exerted on the way in which the courts operate. But Administrative intervention goes further

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Secretariat or the Legislative Council. The agenda consists of items suggested by the African members and by the Administration. The African members of the Council elect four of their number as their nominees to the African Representative Council of Northern Rhodesia, which in its turn advises the Governor on the appointment of the African members of Legislative Council. As yet, the Provincial Council meetings attract little attention among the bulk of the African population, and few Ngoni know who their members are. Nevertheless among the chiefs and councillors these meetings, if regarded with suspicion, are of some interest, and for the two delegates they provide an opportunity for stressing in public what they regard as the Ngoni point of view as contrasted with those of other tribes. Many of the Ngoni speeches are phrased in anachronistic terms, and represent more an affirmation of how different the Ngoni are or used to be rather than a realization of how similar their interests now are to those of their neighbours. However, it is possible as the Council acquires more power and the consequences of its deliberations begin to affect more people directly, Ngoni will take a greater interest in its proceedings.[1] The same comments apply to Ngoni participation on the Provincial Team, an advisory body with representatives from the Administration, the unofficial White community, Indians and Africans.

Ngoniland is almost completely surrounded by Cewa chiefdoms. The old no-man's-land which isolated the Ngoni from their neighbours in pre-conquest times has long ago disappeared. On the fringes of Ngoni country there is a great deal of contact between Ngoni villages and their Cewa neighbours and the links of kinship stretch across tribal boundaries without interruption. Within Ngoniland itself, under the control of county chiefs, are some villages which still speak the Cewa language rather than the Nsenga dialect used by most Ngoni. Most of these Cewa-speaking villages have come into Ngoniland after 1898. Their numbers are indicated in Table VII (p. 133) where it will be seen that on the average about one village in five has entered in this way. The great majority of these are Cewa in origin. Some of them claim that they have returned to ancestral sites, others state that they came as a result of land alienation or of some quarrel with their former chief. Others have been formed by non-Ngoni immigrants who have worked for many years in the township or on the farms and built up their own followings. In Northern Rhodesia villages of this kind form an integral part of Ngoni society. The cultural features which distin-

[1] cf. Barnes, 'History', for a discussion of the way in which Ngoni members act at council meetings.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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Ngoni, he was welcomed everywhere as one who could speak with authority about the culture and customs of his people, and the central Ngoni, when talking about their history and customs, wanted him to realize that they too were 'real Ngoni' (*Ngoni eni eni*). The general relationships before 1939 were that the political separation between the kingdoms and their secession states was accepted as final. On the social and cultural level, the Ngoni from one state sought contacts with the Ngoni from another state or kingdom in preference to contacts with other ethnic groups. In using the term Ngoni in this context, as throughout this book, I am referring to people with Swazi and trans-Zambesi clan descent names.

THE MAIN POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

The District Commissioner of Ncheu in his report for 1935, after the Native Administration Ordinance had been in operation for over a year, wrote of the central Ngoni kingdom: 'The tribal system is, comparatively speaking, intact under a chief who commands universal respect.'[1] The political system of the Ngoni in both kingdoms was based on a ruling aristocracy in which the Paramount of the royal clan was the head, supported by influential members of his own clan and of other leading clans. There were three main elements in this ruling aristocracy: the Paramount, with whose office was linked provision for a regency at the death of the incumbent and during the minority of his successor; the subordinate chiefs who ruled under him in recognized areas; and the heads of Swazi clans called *alumuzana*. I shall use these terms, chiefs and *alumuzana*, when speaking of the Ngoni kingdoms. In the northern kingdom all six chiefs was of the royal clan. In the central kingdom none of the six chiefs were of the royal clan but, with one exception, all were recognized as *alumuzana*. This distribution of authority among the six chiefs under the Paramount in the northern kingdom meant that several of the leading *alumuzana* felt excluded from political control of the villages and area which they were said to 'own', because they had no recognized court. This led at times to friction between them and the chiefs of the royal clan. In the central kingdom the position was different, for though some *alumuzana* were recognized as chiefs, others were not, and friction occurred at times between the chiefs and other *alumuzana*, and also between the chiefs and members of the royal clan. In both areas allegiance to the Paramount was, however, a strong unifying element.

The ruling aristocracy was in its turn supported by a hierarchy of officials, some traditional, some appointed to meet modern requirements

[1] *Annual Report of the Provincial Commissioner for the Nyasaland Protectorate.* 1935. p. 34.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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associated. When warfare ceased the Ngoni could no longer force subject peoples to accept their rule and their cultural institutions, and they had to acquiesce in considerable cultural heterogeneity within their kingdoms, which, according to Ngoni informants, would not have been allowed in pre-European days. The illustrations they gave were in terms of the families living 'on the horns of the village', in many cases the families of captives taken in war. Formerly, they said, those families would have been made to marry with *lobola*, to have their ears pierced in Ngoni fashion, to serve in the army, to be associated with one of the house-groups and serve them in the huts or in the gardens. When Ngoni political power declined, and when large villages broke up, some of these groups formed their own villages and reverted to their former practices of matrilineal descent and uxorilocal residence, and of girls' initiation ceremonies.

In the northern kingdom one section of the peoples under Hanga leadership had adopted a patrilineal system before the Ngoni came. The effect of the Ngoni conquest was to strengthen these practices in this northern section, adding marriage by *lobola*, and to extend them to the southern Tumbuka whose kinship and marriage practices were like those of the Cewa who were their neighbours.[1] In the central kingdom, patrilineal descent, marriage by *lobola* and virilocal residence were only practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and they had introduced variations in virilocal residence which will be discussed in Chapter IV, Part III. Within the true Ngoni families in both kingdoms the senior men and women in the 1930's were aware that cultural conformity with Ngoni practices was not as strict as it had been in their parents' days. They spoke of those Ngoni families who were non-conforming as 'people who spoil the land'.

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On the other hand, the adoption of Ngoni customs by non-Ngoni in the Ngoni kingdoms, that is by families with descent names from cis-Zambesi and local clans, continued to take place after European rule began. I found several instances of this adoption in the central kingdom, and many of them were related to the acquisition of cattle by former non-Ngoni families. It was chiefly the virilocal form of residence and patrilineal descent which were taken over with *lobola* marriage. When describing the adoption of such Ngoni practices, informants always said it was *monga cingoni* (like the Ngoni). Those who belonged to the Ngoni kingdoms and had largely adopted Ngoni culture expressed strong sentiments of attachment to it; this was particularly true of town-dwellers who had come from the Ngoni kingdoms but were not members of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans. Though they adopted many external forms of European culture in dress, houses and food, the consciousness of their association with Ngoni culture and the Ngoni kingdoms was expressed in strongly emotional terms.

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[1] Tew, M. op. cit. pp. 107, 109.

2: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1956
FRS Ngoni FRS

the south end of the lake in 1891, he pleaded with him not to use force against the northern Ngoni. 'Don't fight them,' he urged, 'enlist them.' The military commander, Captain Maugaire, who was present at the interview, showed interest in the idea of a new recruiting ground for the regular forces in Nyasaland, but his ideas were not pursued as it proved to be easier to continue recruiting the Yao and Tonga who had already shown themselves good military material.

In the central kingdom the first reactions of the Administration towards the Ngoni were favourable. Paramount Cikusi was visited by administrators in 1881 and 1886, and in 1890 concluded a treaty placing himself under British protection. On his death in 1891 his successor Gomani I sent messengers to inform the Administration of his father's death, to declare his allegiance to the British, and to present a bull and a cow, four tusks of ivory and twenty-five men to help in the war against the slave-raiders. In the following year 100 Ngoni warriors were drafted into the regular forces and Mr. H. H. Johnston reported: 'The Ngoni are altogether a splendid people and may be regarded as the backbone of British Central Africa.'[1] But this co-operative relationship did not last. In 1896 it was reported that 'Gomani and a number of his turbulent young headmen were opposed to our influence.'[2] Ngoni armies raided a mission station, an expeditionary force under British officers was sent, the Paramount's village was attacked and his army defeated. He was taken prisoner and, refusing to walk to Zomba, was shot near Dombole in his former kingdom.

In the 1930's the Ngoni of the central kingdom referred repeatedly to the expedition sent against them, the defeat of their army, the death of their Paramount and the seizure of some of their cattle. They nursed a grudge against their conqueror which coloured much of their sentiments towards Europeans. They sometimes referred to the long period of contact of the northern Ngoni kingdom with the Livingstonia Mission, and contrasted it with their contacts with several missions who appeared to them to be in league with the Administration against them and not to take their side in relations with the Government as Dr. Laws had done in the north.

When Cibambo visited the central Ngoni kingdom with me in 1936 he was interested in making comparisons with his own Ngoni of the north. He found that in central Ngoniland there were very few men who knew Ngoni songs well, and that in general the knowledge of the Ngoni language had almost died out. The big shields were not, he thought, as well cut as those in the north. Yet the war-dances were performed correctly, and the war-dress which the dancers wore was more striking than anything which had been preserved in the north.

[1] Johnston, H. H. *Report of the First Three Years' Administration of the Eastern Portion of B.C.A.* 1894, p. 24.
[2] Johnston, H. H. *Report on Trade and General Conditions in Nyasaland, 1896-7*, p. 7.

2: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1954
FRS Ngoni FRS

boys and young men, so long as they were in the village. Ngoni men believed that their children should be correctly trained, and they were contemptuous of Cewa and other tribal groups who left it 'all to the women'. The handing on of correct behaviour by the mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law was, they considered, essential, and one of the reasons why young men in the central kingdom liked to 'marry up' was that they could count on the careful grounding in all the canons of behaviour which their wives had received.

CHAPTER V

AGE SETS

THE Ngoni brought with them to Nyasaland an age-set system akin to that among the South-eastern Bantu, which was an important element in their social structure. In pre-European days the division into cattle-herders or pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors or senior men, regulated the tasks and responsibilities of boys and men in other spheres besides those of warfare. At the beginning of this section, when reviewing age sets as one of the constituent forms of Ngoni social organization, I said that some features of an age-set system had persisted. In comparison with age-grouping in the other Nyasaland tribes it was distinctively Ngoni in form; it influenced behaviour patterns in inter-group and intra-group relations; and in it were recognized certain responsibilities and activities belonging to the different groups based on age.

Among the distinctively Ngoni elements in the age-set system were the private nature of the puberty ritual and the absence of initiation schools; the organization of boys' life in the *kraal*; the strong ties between age mates up to marriage; the selective principle in designating senior men and women as *malinde* and *mamise*; and a different kind of selective principle in the formation of friendship pacts between individuals of the same age. In observing the role of age sets in Ngoni village society, the two main groups which were constantly in evidence as groups were the older boys and girls and the senior men and women. These groups not only carried out activities together, but also showed evidence of the strength of the internal ties linking members of an age set. There were, however, no sharp edges to these groups, either in terms of actual age or physiological development or of exclusive membership. The following list of terms applied to age sets in the two main Ngoni areas shows primarily the difference in designation between males and females according to broad age grouping, but it illustrates also the fact that the terminology applied to the age sets did not always coincide

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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recognition of the Paramount's superiority were therefore the main traditional forces uniting the mixed populations in the kingdoms.

Ngoni society

Although all people living in the Ngoni kingdoms were subjects of the Paramount, only those who could trace their descent from families who crossed the Zambezi River were recognized as 'true Ngoni'. Four main characteristics marked off this true Ngoni group from the rest. The first was their clan name, giving them an authentic origin south of the Zambezi. The second was a marriage contract sealed by handing over cattle, which established the offspring as 'children of their fathers', for, as they said, 'where the children are, the cattle are not'. The third was patrilineal descent and inheritance through the male line, and patrilocal residence at marriage, so that the wife came as a 'stranger' to her husband's people and village. The fourth was membership of a 'house', the social group of male members of Ngoni families with their wives and children round a leading woman. Everyone was born into a 'house' and the men remained in it for life, the women until their marriage. For special reasons children could be adopted into another house than the one into which they were born.

In a few of the smaller villages of North Nyasaland, consisting of ten to fifteen huts, all the men were true Ngoni, descendants of one or more former warriors in the same regiment, who had chosen to set up their own villages after the British had taken over the country. In such villages the cultural pattern of Ngoni life could be seen clearly, but they were not typical of the Ngoni kingdoms. There was always a mixture of peoples in the larger villages, dominated by a group of true Ngoni families.

This group of true Ngoni families were the social and cultural aristocracy of these villages. They considered themselves superior to and distinct from the other ethnic elements

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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in the village, whom they regarded as inferior not only because they had been conquered, but because they disliked and despised their way of living. This sense of separateness from and of superiority to the non-Ngoni elements in the villages had its counterpart in the close ties which existed with Ngoni families in other villages. These ties were reinforced socially by 'dynastic' or inter-clan marriages, and politically through the hierarchy of courts and officials leading up to the Paramount's court and entourage.

The Ngoni aristocracy endeavoured to maintain their traditional ways of living and of bringing up their children in the face of changes creeping in from the non-Ngoni elements in the village, as well as from external European influences. The maintenance of Ngoni ways of living and cultural patterns of behaviour depended on three main elements in village society. One was the degree of integration between the Ngoni men in their house groups and in village society as a whole. This was most evident in chiefs' villages, and in the villages belonging to the heads of clans. The second element was the number of wives of true Ngoni families who had married into the village, thus combining the influence of husband and wife, or rather of father and mother, in bringing up children on the Ngoni pattern. The third element was the number and influence of senior women of Ngoni families, either wives of older men in the village, or widows of former leaders. This senior women's group, many of whom were addressed as 'mother' by the Ngoni fathers of young families, were a formidable force in maintaining tradition, by advising their sons, coercing their daughters-in-law, and holding on to their authority at every stage of the children's development.

Life in two Ngoni villages

I am going briefly to sketch in, as a general background for the following chapters, the main features of two villages, in one of which I lived for several months, in the other for a few weeks.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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There were musicians and craftsmen there, as at Enkodlweni. All the senior Ngoni men knew Ngoni history, used proverbs in the courts and in conversation, and two or three senior men knew and carried out the ritual of the ancestor cult. The new element in this village was due to economic influences rather than missionary and educational. Most of the men had learned to read and write Nyanja while away at work, but no one knew more than a few words of English, and only one or two of the leading men, and no women, spoke Ngoni.

The men of the leading Ngoni families formed a closely knit group for purposes of village affairs, social life and ritual performances. There was a group of senior Ngoni women who exerted a powerful influence in all matters concerned with household life and the bringing up of children. But out of a total of one hundred and twenty-one households, only thirty-seven belonged to men of Ngoni clans, and there were only thirty-two women of Ngoni clans including both the older and the younger groups of women. The aristocratic group here was small in comparison with Enkodlweni, but the influence of their ways of living was proportionately much stronger. The Ngoni men and women of leading families were very conscious of their cultural distinction and also of their relatively small numbers, and many were the complaints about 'those other people who are spoiling our land'.

Political and social changes

When the British took over the administration of Nyasaland between 1891 and 1901, the Ngoni kingdoms received no special recognition. Their chiefs, called by the administration principal village headmen, and their heads of clans called village headmen, were relegated to the same position *vis-à-vis* the administration as the local peoples. Part of the Central Ngoni kingdom was cut off from the rest by the treaty demarcating the Nyasaland boundary from Portuguese East African.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

as young men, and had known the independence and supremacy of the Ngoni kingdoms. The expression 'everything is finished now' was often on their lips, especially when faced by new demands from the government, or by rebellious attitudes from their former subject peoples.

'The middle generation' was the term applied to the men who had as children known the Ngoni kingdoms in their prime. Though they had never fought as warriors nor been enrolled in an age-regiment, some of them had gone to the wars as young boys, carrying the gear for their older brothers. Many of these men, especially in the North, came under the influence of the missions, and became teachers, clerks, ministers and hospital assistants, married Christian wives and brought up their children in Christian, but Ngoni Christian, families. These men never lost their attachment to the Ngoni way of living, and many of them had made a successful synthesis of the old and the new ways. They stood, as they said, 'between' the generations, for they knew and understood both sides of an immensely different way of living and standard of values. Their children were 'the generation of today', who had no personal experience of past Ngoni ascendancy, and who took mission schooling and working for wages as a normal feature of their life.

When I lived in Ngoni villages, such as those described briefly in this chapter, Ngoni values and attitudes dominated social relationships. There was a determined struggle on the part of all responsible for child training to inculcate these Ngoni ideas and ways of living. The senior men and women were aware of the constant and increasing infiltration into their way of living of ideas, attitudes and behaviour coming from other ethnic groups in their midst. In addition their culture was being undermined by European influences in the schools, in the money economy, and from modern political developments, emphasizing an all-Nyasaland sentiment rather than loyalties based on ethnic grouping. Ngoni pride of race, and a consciousness that they had a

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

answers to them somewhere, then there have been some vital omissions in the narrative.

Clues to this study

In relating this study to other field studies and analyses of socialization techniques and processes, I have not attempted to present here any general assessment of similar or related studies, much less any review of the field as a whole, since I have touched on both in earlier publications.[1] Instead I have brought into this chapter one or two clues or guide lines from other sources which seemed to me to elucidate some of my problems, particularly in regard to four main aspects of this study, which have already been mentioned in Chapter I and which to a large extent set the limits and determine the emphases of this book. The 'true Ngoni' were a society within a society, a distinct cultural group within the Ngoni kingdom. This society of theirs had sharp edges, definable and recognizable limits, and that partly accounted for their own awareness of themselves as distinct from, though at so many points connected with, the neighbouring peoples. Their culture, that is their way of living within this society, had definite values which they strove to maintain, and this was one of the reasons why the ideal Ngoni personality pattern, and their endeavour to see it reproduced in each child, was easy to recognise. In order to safeguard their society and maintain their culture they exercised a fairly rigid social control over the upbringing of their children, which resulted in something approaching a 'system' of training and educating children. Set against this conservation of traditional values however was the reality and extent of changes due to external circumstances mentioned at the end of Chapter I. In the face of these changes the Ngoni showed that they could adapt some of them to their own purposes, and they made use of the schools, for example, once they approved of them, to help adjust their

[1] See Appendix (i)

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

the qualities required in self-defence and in mutual aid which he would need when, at the age of eighteen or so, he was called up into the new regiment formed by the Paramount. Dormitory life was therefore rooted in the Ngoni past and, though its original purpose and outcome had disappeared with the suppression of tribal wars, it was still part of the organization for herding cattle and was regarded as a necessary training ground for young manhood. In very large villages there was more than one dormitory, each placed in a section of the village surrounding a cattle kraal. Boys belonged to the dormitory of that section where their parents' household was situated. There were occasional attempts sponsored by certain missions to set up a separate dormitory for boys who were baptized Christians or in an inquirers' class. This kind of separation was greatly disliked by the Ngoni on the grounds that they did not want anything to divide their people. They regarded dormitory life as an important co-ordinating factor in their young peoples' development, and they did not want the tradition to be spoiled. They therefore opposed any sectionalizing of the dormitory system except on the geographical lines already mentioned, which allowed for the full operation of the two remaining purposes of the dormitory in Ngoni culture.

The first of these purposes was to remove boys, once they had their second teeth, from the influence of the women. Ngoni men were outspoken in condemning the effects of all women's influence on boys. They made a slight exception in favour of the mothers and grandmothers of high-ranking Ngoni clans. Non-Ngoni women they always suspected, and often rightly, of introducing youths and girls to ideas and practices which were contrary to Ngoni custom, particularly in connexion with sex and magic. It was partly a belief that dormitory life would 'Ngoni-ize' the boys and counteract non-Ngoni influences from whatever source that made them so unyielding about boys leaving the women's supervision at what they considered a crucial stage.

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VII

The Threshold of Adulthood (ii)

Knowledge and skills

967 Towards the end of the last chapter we said that in the fol-
968 lowing chapter we would be concerned with the knowledge
nd skills which young adults in Ngoni society needed before
ey could assume the adult role of setting up and managing
anew home, and of taking part in village and national af-
firs. Here and there in earlier chapters there have been
eferences to 'men's affairs' and the 'world of women', sug-
gesting that there was a range of knowledge, of activities and
competence in those activities for which preparation and
raining was needed for those on the threshold of adulthood.

In talking with the Ngoni about the way in which they were handing on their traditional knowledge to the younger generations, they often distinguished between two kinds of knowledge: one a wide range of perceptions and information necessary to carry out daily and occasional activities in the household and village; and the other, a corpus of traditional lore about natural phenomena, and about their history and law. This is not altogether a valid distinction since both kinds of knowledge were traditional but it is a convenient way of approaching the two kinds of instruction given to young adults. The Ngoni were often apt to stress the importance of this second kind of knowledge because they resented the attitude of many Europeans that the Ngoni, and other African peoples, were 'ignorant' until the schools came. This touched them on a very sore point since they set great store on knowledge and wisdom in men and women, and did

967
[186]
[577]

3: Read E-S (1935-1939)1960
FRS Ngoni FRS

821 or other pregnant announcement: 'Listen. Do you hear? The chief says there is a great matter being discussed. It is not here but elsewhere. The case is very important.' Then the women took their poles and struck the tall wooden pounding mortars with resounding blows. A Ngoni elder commented to me: 'Listen. They are washing the moon from its clouds, so that it may come out of the darkness and shine again.' The event was curiously reminiscent of an eclipse during my stay in an Indian village when pots were struck 'to wash the moon'.

Reckoning of numbers

802 The Ngoni used tens as units in counting. They began with the right hand clenched, like the fist they raised in the traditional greeting. One by one they raised from the bent-in position the thumb and each finger in turn, and then did the same with the left hand. When they reached ten they struck one hand against the other with all the fingers extended and said '*ikhumi*' (ten), and for twenty, thirty and so on they struck their hands together the correct number of times. For one hundred they used the word '*ikuda*', but it was generally agreed that this had not been in their original counting [171] terms, but had been brought in when the Zulu Bible came to them with the first Scottish missionaries.

Ngoni history

814 To a people like the Ngoni whose remembered past was one of migrations, conquests and settlement in a new country, their history was no dead verbal record but a living reminder [186] of their past achievements, and of their cultural and political differences from the people around them in Nyasaland. There were many occasions in Ngoni village life, especially in the villages of chiefs and heads of leading clans when recitals of history took place. Frequent references were made to historical events in songs, court cases, when visiting Ngoni came, in the vernacular readers used in the Scottish Mission

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

parallel of the Jews of the Old Testament preparing the way for the Christian era to illustrate and drive home their belief that they, the Ngoni, had prepared the way for the Christian Gospel in Nyasaland. "Were we not also a people who hated idols and images? We too tried to reach the Great God through our ancestor spirits, but we failed, until the mission came to teach us." "We held together the people of this land under one rule so that the missionaries could travel safely and spread the Gospel teaching." These beliefs were stated so often that they became almost standard formula, and the incongruity of this picture with some of the warlike situations recorded by the earliest missionaries was ignored and forgotten. In the churches, where the people sat on mats, Sunday by Sunday, facing their Ngoni ministers, rising to sing, in their typical Ngoni harmonies, Christian hymns set to former Ngoni war tunes—in this setting Ngoni history was brought home, interwoven with the new teaching, to young adults who formed the majority of the congregation. For Ngoni elders it was something more than a reminder of their past. It was setting the Ngoni people in a special relationship to the European missionaries and the new learning, compensating for the passing of military power and political supremacy by establishing Ngoni cultural superiority over their neighbours. This gave some spiritual reassurance to a people in the throes of political change, and it was a lesson which lost none of its significance for the young adults who heard it.

Ngoni law

'There was one law for all the people. No one could be ignorant of the law.' These were the words, quoted in Chapter I, which the Ngoni used frequently to describe the importance of law in their culture, its role in the political unification of their own and subject peoples, and the responsibility, laid on all adults, for knowledge of the law and conformity with its demands. An incident in a court of law, which was unforgettable to an anthropologist, was a case in which a chief sat

3: Read E-S (1935-1939)1960
FRS Ngoni FRS

159 church funds in cash or in kind, and helped to build the
777 church and school.

The younger headmaster of the school had never been threatened with death. He came in on the tide of recognition
159 and respect accorded to the character and behaviour of the
815 evangelist. His grandfather, like the evangelist's father, had been a well-known warrior with his own praise song celebrating his exploits. When the chief saw the exemplary
[622] behaviour of the headmaster and his Ngoni wife, listened to
[871] some of the lessons in school, watched the boys "drill" in the playground, he ordered all Ngoni boys and girls in the village to attend school, and arranged a roster for cattle-herding, so that the boys would learn herding as well as their school lessons. He sent for the headmaster to report to him periodically on how the children were behaving, and which ones were showing particular aptitudes. The young headmaster showed characteristic Ngoni ability to organise his school, control his staff, demand and get good behaviour from the children. He was, like the evangelist, a huntsman of repute, and he was too a good dancer, and had a judgement in public affairs that was acknowledged to be beyond his years.

The aversion shown in the other Ngoni village described
177 in Chapter I to schools and to missions generally arose
797 partly from the fact that there were no Ngoni teachers or
871 ministers serving that area. The teachers in near-by schools
• 186 were from a tribe whom the Ngoni despised and whose personal habits they deplored. The missions in the area had made no attempt to integrate schoolteaching and preaching in the churches with Ngoni life and thought. Some Ngoni fathers sent their boys to the Scottish Mission boarding-school in Blantyre, and were willing to pay the fees because they knew and believed in those in charge of that school.

871 Ngoni fathers, and this was true of both areas, expected
463 their boys who had been to school and had entered European
554 employment away from their homes, to find work which assured them a superior and not an inferior or unskilled

information is insufficient for any reconstruction in great detail, but the general principles are clear and to some extent our conclusions can be checked by reference to material from other areas, particularly the nineteenth century accounts of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland and the Zulu. The account of present-day marriage is based on information collected in the field during 1946-8.[1]

The period of the 1890's is chosen for comparison with the present because of the catastrophic change in Ngoni life which occurred in 1898 when they were defeated by the British. Old people who were alive during the period are still available for questioning and many younger people have been told of those times by their parents and grandparents. Although Ngoni cannot generally remember beyond their grandparents, genealogies collected now yield some information about the 1890's and link that period to the present. Important social changes occurred in 1898, changes which for the greater part were, and still are, regretted by the Ngoni, and these accentuate the differences between time present and time past. The past is recollected and recounted and has a moral value. Children are taught the glories of the past to compensate them for the inadequacies of the present. The teaching of tribal history as a school subject reinforces this view. With the passage of time the past has been idealised and simplified but the picture is still clear enough for us to be able to distinguish probable fact from unlikely rationalisation. Marriage in 'the time of peace', as the period prior to 1898 is called, is one aspect of this picture.

Marriage is one part of kinship, for it is by the twin processes of marriage and childbirth that the web of kinship is spun. For the purposes of our analysis we have had to sever marriage from its context in what may appear at times rather an arbitrary fashion. A society is a whole, if not always a well integrated whole, and no one part of it can be fully understood without a simultaneous knowledge of all its other parts. Societies persist, more or less, through time, and it is clear that we cannot hope to grasp the total significance of the working of a society at any one time without a knowledge of the changes or lack of change in that society both before and after. Yet we cannot marshal all these relationships simultaneously, let alone present them through the medium of words. Our attempt to comprehend the present cannot wait until we have full knowledge of the future, and our analysis of one sector of a system must proceed in advance of our synthesis of the whole. Ngoni society has persisted through the last sixty years rather less than more, and it may well be argued that present-day Ngoni society is poorly integrated. Nevertheless it is to be hoped that an analysis of Ngoni marriage may, on the one hand, demonstrate

[1] I made two visits to the Fort Jameson Ngoni while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, spending in all a year and eight months there. I was assisted by my clerk, Mr. M. D. Lukhero, in inquiring into former conditions as well as observing contemporary social life.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni
Mtshuki FR4
Wisa FR5

her by her parents, but the general rule is that people seek their own partners. Certain rules have to be considered by whoever is trying to arrange the match. These determine which marriages are regarded as incestuous, and which marriages are preferred. The kinship relationship, age, ethnic group, and religion of the partner all have to be considered. With the passing of the regimental system, considerations of State no longer affect choice of marriage partner, except for near relatives of the chiefs.

A man may not marry anyone whom he addresses with a kinship term belonging to the first ascending or the first descending generation. This prohibits marriage between ego and his *mother, father, mother, brothers, sisters* and *children*.[1] In his own generation he cannot marry his *child's parents-in-law* and he cannot marry any *sibling* who is not a *cross-cousin*. In the second ascending and descending generation a man may address his female *grandparent* and his female *grandchild* as *wife*, and he can, to a slight extent, joke and refer in general terms to sexual activities in their presence. But Nguni regard it as a typical Cewa custom for a man actually to marry his female *grandchild*, and do not approve of such marriages among their own people. A man may fondle the breasts of his grandmother and suggest in the company of others at a beer drink that his granddaughter should marry him, but that is as far as this joking goes.

A man is entitled, and to some extent expected, to flirt with his female *cross-cousins*. We have noted above that the Nguni peoples from whom the leaders of the Ngoni kingdom were drawn did not allow cross-cousin marriage. By contrast the Cewa and Wisa peoples, who were captured in large numbers from about 1870 on, came from societies in which local organization was based on bilateral intra-village cross-cousin marriage. In villages where there are now many people claiming Cewa and Wisa descent there are many instances of cross-cousin marriage. This form of marriage is by no means confined to people of low ethnic status, and even the Paramount Chief has married classificatory cross-cousins. In the aristocratic families it is sometimes suggested that an important man might marry a cross-cousin while still young and unable to muster a large marriage payment and then later marry an unrelated woman as his great wife. No distinction is made between marriage with father's sister's daughter and with mother's brother's daughter. The somewhat equivocal attitude towards cross-cousin marriage is seen in the conflicting statements of informants about payments in cross-cousin marriages. Some say that no payments ought to be made, for are they not all one family (*banja*). If payments were made it would mean that the family had split. Others say that payments can and ought to be made and that provided the cross-

[1] For the definition of these terms, see Barnes, op. cit. pp. 222 ff

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni
MATSVI FR4

Case history 7

Amos[1] was married to Eve and wished to offer bridewealth for her. Amos's father prevented him, saying that the marriage of Amos's sister with Eve's father's son had not yet proved a success and and he did not want at this stage to bind himself any further to Eve's kindred.

There are no exogamous clans among the Ngoni but sometimes an agnatic lineage has a distinctive descent-name, giving it the appearance of an exogamous clan. Kinship terms are used within the lineage and members may not marry one another. As, however, descent is not usually traced, either actually or putatively, beyond the grandparents of adults these exogamous groupings are small and do not persist in time.

Tribal preferences are not marked. In the past the Ngoni were prepared to capture and incorporate into their society anyone who came in their path. At the same time there was an association of South-Eastern Bantu origin with high rank, although this was never developed into a rigid system of ethnic ranking. Nowadays Ngoni live in the midst of people from other tribes, in the adjacent reserves, on the tobacco farms, in Fort Jameson township and at the urban centres. A man may sometimes be ridiculed if he marries a Cewa girl but many men do so, particularly if they live in Cewa-speaking villages under Ngoni chiefs. Wealthy Cewa men from Cewa chiefdoms who wish to bequeath their property to their sons sometimes marry Ngoni women and offer bridewealth for them, hoping thereby to prevent their sister's sons disputing the inheritance. There are many men on farms and in the township coming from distant areas whose tribe may be uncertain or unknown but who manage to marry Ngoni girls. The only strong antagonism is against the Nyasaland Yao. Yao find it difficult to marry into aristocratic Ngoni families and even when they do their rights are never certain. The Yao are regarded by the Ngoni as clever sorcerers and are thought to have an excess of sexual vigour.

A few women become the concubines of European or Indian men. Such unions lack much of the substance of marriage, although the man sometimes makes a present to the woman's relatives which is interpreted as a marriage payment. These men are not usually concerned with establishing the validity of the marriage, if marriage it is. They cannot take action against their wives in the Native Courts, nor can they hope for redress in the Administration's courts. Although the Administration assists women to secure maintenance of the children, it does not recognize these unions as legal marriages. In vernacular speech they are referred to as marriages and, despite the protestations in recent years of more sophisticated Africans, these women are not despised in the rural areas. A woman who

[1] All personal names in this paper are fictitious. I have used Biblical names as these are common among the Ngoni. Where an individual is mentioned in more than one case history I have retained the same fictitious name throughout.

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FRS Ngoni FRS

The Fort Jameson Ngoni[1] are at this stage of transition. Many men and some women can read, if not write, and we can no longer call the tribe non-literate. Yet a society of this kind behaves in many ways as if it were non-literate. In particular, information about the past is transmitted orally and laws and customs are not committed to writing. In this paper I shall discuss some of the ways in which this information is manipulated. I shall distinguish between tales of fighting, relating to the period 1821–1898, which we may regard as tribal legends of origin; beliefs about customary behaviour relating to the same period; private legends which serve to explain the form of relations between present-day groups; and lastly history proper, documents describing contemporary events, if such exist.

Early travellers all speak of the various Ngoni groups as fierce warrior tribes interested only in destruction and plunder. With the spread of European control Ngoni raids ceased. Today in villages inhabited mainly by women and children, with scraggy animals and eroded gardens, the traveller looking for signs of a military tradition sees only khaki greatcoats and battledress. Among the Fort Jameson group, if not elsewhere, the great cowhide shields, and the regiments which carried them, have disappeared. Yet the battles of the past are still remembered and are called to mind in songs sung at drunken parties, in tales told to children and, importunately, to sympathetic strangers. Many of these songs are in the old Ngoni language now largely forgotten, and singers cannot give any precise meaning to the songs they sing. They are the relics of the past learnt parrot-fashion and in the context in which they are sung they do not require any specific reference. In our own culture we do not need to know who were the April rainers before we can sing "Green grow the rushes, O". Prose tales, however, are in ordinary speech and describe military exploits of people known to the speaker, or preparations for raiding ordered by the Paramount Chief and carried out by his lieutenants. The most frequently recounted battle of all is the fight between Ngoni and British troops in 1898. Many men and women are still alive who remember the fighting or even took part in it. The cataclysmic changes which followed the Ngoni defeat and the unusual weapons used combine to make the battle memorable. It is the only admitted defeat, for all other tales tell only of victory. The Ngoni defeated the Bemba, Wisa, Cewa, Kunda, and so on.

We know from contemporary travellers' accounts that though on the whole the Ngoni were successful against their neighbours, their run of successes was not unbroken. There is evidence that on occasion even the Cewa raided the Ngoni and took captives. We may regard the form taken by these legends as due in part to the process found in most cultures by which victories are remembered and defeats forgotten. But the distortion introduced is not only the elimination of defeat. The Administration and the Missions have,

1. I worked among these people during 1946–49 while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

in general, encouraged co-operation between tribes and have treated all tribes as equals. They have emphasized the values of peace rather than a war, and have condemned pagan rites. In the light of this teaching legends have been modified to conform to modern values. The barbarity of the raids has been minimized and the good qualities of the old military discipline have been extolled. Sometimes men say that the old armies never fought but only danced, or that people from other tribes were not captured but all joined the Ngoni of their own free will (as in fact some did). It is said that there was never any ancestor-worship; the names of the Paramount Chief's ancestors were merely mentioned in prayers "as King George is mentioned now". This process by which the Ngoni conquerors of yesterday are made to look like the European conquerors of today is no new phenomenon. The Ngoni identified themselves with Europeans rather than with their matrilineal neighbours even before the European conquest. Wiese, himself the main agent of their defeat, wrote, "They are very proud, looking down on all the other tribes with contempt, and think they show great courtesy whenever they assure the European traveller that the Whites may be related to them."[4]

Another traveller, arriving from the south in 1896, relates how he ran into an armed patrol on the outskirts of Ngoni country. His own carriers ran away but he called out to the patrol that he was a friend of the Paramount Chief, speaking in Zulu. He then heard them saying, "He is an Ngoni and a white man."[5] My own informants told me that the old Ngoni language was closer to English than to Nyanja.

This reinterpretation of the past in the light of the present has not produced a consistent picture of a proto-European society. The inconsistencies of the present remain and are reflected in the ambivalent attitude adopted to the past. Although in one context people recall that everything was well ordered and peaceful in the past, in other contexts they dwell on the unlimited power of the Paramount Chief and the fierceness of his warriors. An aristocratic man once said to me at a beer party, "If this was the old days I would kill all these Cewa drinking here." Yet the general impression which people usually try to convey is of a disciplined, proud, and successful people.

This picture is accepted not only by Ngoni themselves but also by Europeans. For us it is one part of the good old days when Africans still smiled and were nature's gentlemen. Our picture of the Ngoni contains fewer concessions to contemporary White values, for the very distinction between Whites now and Blacks then increases the attractiveness of the picture. Ancestor worship and polygyny are not unwelcome in a Black Arcadia.

Ngoni nowadays compare themselves with their European and Indian neighbours and envy their apparent power and wealth. They seek to rationalize their own relative failure in terms of their past. It is in this connection

4. Wiese, *Geschichte*, pp. 200 f.

5. Later, when he had satisfactorily answered questions on Zululand geography, Mp'zeni said of him, "He is a chief . . . he is an Angoni, one of us." Deare, *Slave Raiders*, pp. 19 and 25.

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

181 that the defeat of 1898 is important. Although they claim to have conquered
●186 all their African neighbours, Ngoni do not claim success over the British.
Instead, defeat at the hands of the British is cited in explanation of every
648 present-day failure and of every departure from traditional practice. Ngoni
186 say, "If we had not been defeated we would not have lost our land and we
would not now go hungry"; and "If we had not been defeated the tribes
would not have been mixed up and we could follow our customs properly",
[729] and so on. In the past, captives taken by the Ngoni were rapidly indoctrinated
with Ngoni ways and themselves became proud Ngoni; Ngoni complain
that now, although captured by Europeans, they never become Europeans.

538 The general legends of the past from which these notions are derived are
814 common knowledge. In the main they are passed on orally and are maintained by the teaching of tribal history in schools, the appeals to old military traditions, when recruiting for the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, the conversations of planters comparing one tribe with another as labourers, by the reports of administrators and by the writings of ethnologists.

643 The link between the Ngoni of today and their illustrious forebears is also
182 symbolized in the office of the Paramount Chief. He bears the name of his
[551] warrior great-grandfather, and the formal aspects of his relationship to his people are explained by reference to his ancestors' achievements. He cannot attend funerals or take part in some of his own marriage ceremonies because "he has already conquered all others"; he cannot be expected to walk through the bush with the District Officer because "he has already conquered the whole world". He basks in his great-grandfather's invincibility, for in this context the defeat of 1898 is forgotten. The relationship between the Paramount Chief and his eleven minor chiefs is partly determined by the distribution of power in different branches of the royal lineage before the European conquest, and the division of the country into these minor chiefdoms is a visible reminder of that distribution.

829 Associated with these tales of military exploits and royal power are myths
178 about former customs. Ngoni say that in the old days they used to hunt, or marry, or build villages, in a particular way and that now they do differently. Frequently when I asked what happened in such-and-such a situation I would be told what my informant thought would have happened before 1898 rather
[583] than what he had seen happen now. Thus if we ask what payments do Ngoni make in marriage we are told that there are two payments, "snuff-box" and bridewealth, consisting of one or more beasts. Further inquiry reveals that these payments are now made only infrequently and that the period referred to is before 1898. More detailed investigation suggests that in many pre-1898 marriages they were not made and that when they were made they did not always consist of beasts. Ngoni do not deny these facts but they do deny their relevance. To them the distinctively Ngoni way of marrying is with these two payments, and it is this process alone which merits the vernacular adjective—*cingoni*. They regret that people no longer marry in this way and

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

Stated very briefly, the problem is this: an Ngoni aristocratic minority created an Ngoni 'state' of mixed ethnic units, imposed a national identity on all who formed part of it, and inspired a real 'national feeling' among those who were assimilated. In this article I propose to look at this problem as it exists to-day in the light of white contact, and more particularly as a prelude to Indirect Rule. My thesis is that Ngoni 'national feeling' is based on the traditions of their past—on the story of their southern origin, their trek from the south, and their settlement in their present areas. I shall show how the continued preservation of their distinctive institutions, together with their strong historical sense, gave them a dominant position in the country, which was enforced through their military and political supremacy. This supremacy was first challenged and then overthrown by the arrival of the Europeans and the defeat of the Ngoni military power. The situation thus created is the key to the Ngoni attitude towards white contact to-day.

The plan of work which I adopted at the beginning had as its aim the establishing of certain essential data—namely, to determine the principles of local or territorial settlement in relation to the political organization and the ethnic constitution of the area. This involved making maps of the Paramount Chief's 'country' and of the 'countries' of his subordinate chiefs, showing the areas over which individuals exercised authority and their relation to those above and below them in the political hierarchy. It also involved making a number of village plans, showing the alignment of houses on the village site, the names and clans of the inhabitants and their mutual relations in terms of kinship groups and village organization.[1] In villages called Ngoni villages, that is, where the 'owner' of the village was of a recognized Ngoni clan and where there was a nucleus of Ngoni clansmen, the individuals in Ngoni clans numbered from 25–75 per cent. of the total inhabitants, the average being about 45 per cent. In a number of the villages where no Ngoni clans were represented, the villagers nevertheless asserted, 'We are Ngoni, because we are the

[1] This collecting of village plans was viewed with some suspicion at first as a new way of helping the Government to catch tax defaulters. However, when I promised the Paramount Chief that no one in the locality should see the village plans, he sent out word that I was to be given all the information I needed, and no one need fear the consequences.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

people of Mpezeni'. When questioned, they acknowledged their local origin as Nsenga or Chewa by kinship and clan, but claimed the name Ngoni in terms of their political allegiance. It is worth while mentioning here that this claim to be Ngoni is made with even more force when men are away from home on the mines or at other work. I found men on the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt and in Johannesburg assert emphatically that they were Ngoni because they were the people of Mpezeni or Gomani, at the same time giving their clan names with a grin because they knew it would reveal their Chewa or Nsenga origin. It is 'the thing' to pass as Ngoni if you can carry it off and in strange places—where the acid test of the clan name is not known—it is easy to do this. A group of Nyasaland men newly arrived on the Crown Mines in Johannesburg told me confidentially, 'Here we say only, "We are all Ngoni". You know that our clan names are Chewa or Tumbuka, but we are the people of Gomani or of Mwambera, and so we say we are Ngoni. And then people are respecting us.' The prestige in the name Ngoni is a matter of pride, not only in their own country, but far and wide in Africa.

The chiefs and other important men among the Ngoni recognize that they are a very mixed group ethnically. When asked, 'What is the meaning of a clan?' they reply, 'It shows a man's tribe that we may know how to respect him.'[1] It is hardly correct, therefore, to speak of the Ngoni as a tribe, for from Natal to Tanganyika men of many 'tribes' joined, or were captured and forcibly assimilated by, the original nucleus of Zulu and Swazi warriors, to be welded by their

[1] I avoid using vernacular terms in this article because usually the Ngoni, Chewa, Nsenga, and Tumbuka terms are all different. The field worker has to make a comparative linguistic table giving equivalent meanings in vernacular terms. Here I use the English word 'clan' to express the unilateral group according to kinship descent. 'Tribe' should be used in a cultural sense, of a group of people possessing a common language and common institutions. The ambiguity with which 'tribe' and its vernacular equivalents is used, by Europeans and Africans alike, necessitates an investigation on linguistic and historical lines. The so-called Chewa tribe, for example, rarely, if ever, use the word Chewa, but refer to themselves as Ntumba, Maravi, &c. The Ngoni, speaking of themselves in the south, refer to the Ndwandwe, Ntungwa, &c., and only use the 'blanket term' Zulu or Swazi when they think you are ignorant of the finer distinctions. I use the word 'tribe' here to express these distinctive groups, but it is impossible to avoid some ambiguity without long linguistic digressions.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

a hierarchy of rank expressed in the clan names, and this rank is evident in the position of houses on a village site, and the degree of authority exercised by the clans and the respect[1] accorded to them. In effect, all those whose ancestors were absorbed before the final break up of the main Ngoni group are recognized as having some claim to the name Ngoni. The rest, that is the clans found in the areas where the Ngoni finally settled are, or rather were, regarded as conquered or slave people.

We have seen, however, that there is a much wider sense in which the term Ngoni is used—that is, by all who live under the rule of the Paramount Chief. This extended usage is due to the prestige and honour in which the stricter meaning of Ngoni is held. It was illustrated in the instance of the Nyasaland men in Johannesburg, who all claimed to be Ngoni because they had discovered at once that the name commanded respect among the mixture of tribes to be found on the mines. *Indunas* and other leading men sometimes make use of this wider connotation when boasting about the large numbers of people owning allegiance to the Ngoni Paramount Chief, compared with the other petty chieftainships. 'All those in the country of Mpezeni are Ngoni. All are his people.' At the same time they make it clear that there is a distinction between the real Ngoni and the other subjects of the Paramount—a distinction which formerly was much sharper than it is to-day. All are the people of the Paramount, it is true, but in old days the majority of the non-Ngoni were called slaves. To this day the Ngoni when angry may call out to some one, 'Chewa, Chewa', implying 'Slave, slave', and be hauled to the chief's court for insulting language. There the chief will take pains to point out that there are no slaves to-day, and that no Ngoni must 'spoil the country' by insulting the people of the Paramount.

It is, I think, clear that there is a connotation in which the term Ngoni can be used with some degree of scientific accuracy—that is, to cover all those clans which are not belonging to the local tribes, or, in an even stricter sense, the clans of indubitably southern origin.

[1] This word 'respect' is constantly in use among the Ngoni. It implies both 'honour' and 'fear', and they sometimes use one word and sometimes the other. It really means, 'to give a person his due', that is, to behave towards him (or her) in the manner which his rank requires.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

We have also to recognize that the wider connotation of the word is in constant use to-day, and it will be apparent in the course of this article that those who like to be thought Ngoni but have no real claim to the name, find ways in which to identify themselves with the real Ngoni, and to impress upon outsiders that they share the distinction of that name.

III. NGONI SOCIETY AS A CULTURAL UNIT. It is evident that the field worker who tries to describe and analyse the society which is found in the Ngoni areas to-day has some difficulty in establishing appropriate and correct terms. Here is a society which is a compound of ethnic units, subdivided into clans according to kinship, stratified into ranks, held together by a ruling aristocracy and a strong centralized political organization. This society differs radically from that of a homogeneous community where the sociological structure has gone through a long process of integration or disintegration, or has remained static over a period of time. The Ngoni created their 'state', that is, their present political and social units, within a relatively short period by a series of deliberate acts. They brought with them a pattern of society from the south; they modified[1] it during their forty odd years of wandering and warfare; and they moulded it finally when they settled in their present areas. Within this deliberately created social structure the principles of centralization and rank were dominant. Based on these two principles the Ngoni set up, in an alien milieu, the institutions of chieftainship,[2] of military training, of systematized law courts, of recognized ranks in society, of patrilineal succession and inheritance, speaking among themselves a language foreign to the country. The resultant society, a compound of the Ngoni ruling aristocracy and the conquered indigenous people, formed the Ngoni state. So conscious was all this social engineering that old men to-day can give detailed accounts of the various processes, political, legal, military, by which the conquerors and conquered were brought under one rule.[3] Borrowing a term from European history,

[1] One striking modification was the replacing of the village as a small kinship group by villages of hundreds of huts, with an elaborate organization into hamlets.

[2] Using chieftainship in the sense of the Ngoni *inkosi* whose office and powers were very different from those of the surrounding petty chiefs.

[3] As one of these processes, the piercing of the ear-lobes became the 'tribal

178 829 it might almost be called nation-building. And when you have heard the Ngoni Paramount discuss the position of minorities in his country, and his claim to territories no longer under his rule, you could almost imagine you were in the corridors of the League Secretariat at Geneva.

The Ngoni state, however, to-day is not only a political structure, [183] a framework for political and social life. Within that structure, forming parts of it, are institutions embodying those social, political, economic, and ethical values which are peculiarly Ngoni. The Ngoni, [177] that is to say, when they absorbed other peoples into their state, imposed upon them a new social order together with the values inherent in that order. Patrilineal succession and inheritance, for example, introduced by the Ngoni, was bound up with the relations [182] of father to son, the acquiring and distribution of cattle, the worship of clan and family ancestors. Each institution had its clearly related rules and values, and these are made explicit by the Ngoni when they describe them. The casual European observer in the country sees only the Paramount Chief and his subordinate chiefs ruling over a welter of tribes with a confusing mixture of social behaviour. To the Ngoni, however, and to the anthropologist who follows their lead, the pattern of society which they set up is clear and definite; it has a cultural reality of its own. The seeming welter of tribes is in reality an ordered relationship. Each group, tribe, or clan, has its recognized place *vis-à-vis* other groups. Within that ordered relationship the different groups have pursued a process of preserving some customs and adopting others, and they can give a coherent account of what they have retained and what they have borrowed. The real Ngoni do not admit to borrowing much. They like to think of their society as very distinctive as well as being well integrated. Yet the degree of modification in Ngoni society needs very close investigation because it shows much variety in different localities.

121 648 When they entered their present areas the Ngoni were very inferior in numbers to the indigenous people. How was it then that they were [161] able to subdue them? And having subdued them, how did they pre-

[304] [186] mark' of the Ngoni as various forms of tattooing were of other tribes. Ear-piercing was sometimes forced (i.e. upon captives taken in war), sometimes voluntary. To-day children of local clans are teased by children of Ngoni clans and called 'Chewa' if they have not had their ears pierced, and they beg their mothers to take them to the 'doctor' to be 'made Ngoni'.

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serve their own culture, so that they were not submerged in the very different cultures round them? The Ngoni themselves give the answer to this first question, saying, 'We fought with spears and shields; those others had only bows and arrows and sometimes guns.'[1] The making of these shields, which formerly gave courage and protection to the warriors, is to this day almost a ritual. To watch a chief working at one on the threshold of his hut, or a village headman and his friends cutting and shaping one in the kraal, is to realize the value put on them by the Ngoni. They refuse to make them for sale as curiosities, and several Europeans have told me that they have tried in vain to get one.

Having conquered by the shield and spear, the Ngoni maintained their prestige by their highly developed political organization. All around them were small chieftains owning a few villages with no integration in any large political unit.[2] The Ngoni state was focussed in the *inkosi*, the Paramount Chief, who was at once the 'owner'[3] of the land, the 'head'[3] of the state, and the 'father'[3] of his people. The Ngoni, as we have seen, are always ready to indicate those institutions and related traditions which mark them off from the surrounding tribes, and which give their state a cultural reality of its own. They point first to their language and their traditions of Dingiswayo, Zwidi, and Chaka as proving their southern origin. Other neighbouring peoples have vague traditions of wandering from north to south, or west to east, but the Ngoni know exactly where they came from and by what route. Their language is almost identical with old Zulu. I was told by many Europeans that it hardly existed any longer, and I was therefore surprised to find to what an extent it is still spoken and used. Most of the true Ngoni to-day are bilingual[4]; with the exception of a few very old Ngoni people, everyone to-day speaks one of the local vernaculars, Nsenga, Tumbuka, or Chewa.[5] Ngoni is the language of the aristocrats, and a large proportion of the true

[1] The kind of antique guns traded to the Chewa by the Portuguese and Arabs were no match for the Ngoni skill with the long throwing-spear or the short stabbing-assegai, and the bullets were such that the stout cow-hide shields of the Ngoni could withstand them. Hence the consternation of the Ngoni when the machine-gun bullets of the British troops pierced their shields in the Ngoni 'war'.

[2] With the possible exception of Chikuramayembe, Chief of the Henga.

[3] Translations of vernacular terms.

[4] Or trilingual if they know English too.

[5] The same as Nyanja.

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Ngoni understand and speak it. It is in fact one of the distinguishing marks between the true Ngoni and the rest. It is convenient for a chief to be able to exchange a few remarks with a relative or an important visitor in a language which the onlookers cannot follow, and I have also heard a chief do the same with one of his *indunas* during a case in court. When I played Zulu records on my gramophone the aristocrats and old warriors drew near to listen, while the nobodies who could not understand fell back naturally. It is interesting to see how this language test brings out the social distinctions based on family and rank, and produces generally an inferiority reaction among the non-Ngoni.

As other distinguishing institutions the Ngoni point out their dances[1] and songs; their former military organization with its related system of age grades; their political organization under the Paramount Chief with his hierarchy of *amakosana*, *abalumuzana*, *izinduna*, *amanxusa*, &c.; the system of courts, again a hierarchy, with the laws administered in them; their village organization which still preserves the division into *izigawa* or hamlets, characteristic of the very big Ngoni villages of old days; the Ngoni code of ethics, differing radically from the code of the neighbouring tribes, with its insistence on truth, chastity, and personal discipline; and their patrilineal descent in clans and inheritance of property. This last, superimposed upon the local matrilineal and matrilocal tribes, has created a variety of forms of marriage and inheritance which is almost the despair of the field worker. The Ngoni say proudly, ' We taught them to honour their sons ' when pointing out how nephew succession has to a large extent given way before filial succession. The values inherent in certain Ngoni institutions have spread beyond their own areas, for one Chewa Paramount Chief told me he had for long admired the Ngoni system of filial succession and inheritance, and was now trying, in the teeth of much opposition, to introduce it into his country.

After I had been a little while among the Ngoni, and their chiefs and leading men had begun to realize my aim in field work, I was surprised by the help they gave me and the amount of co-operation they showed in my enquiries. Then one day an old *induna* revealed

[1] One Ngoni Paramount has prohibited any but Ngoni dances to be danced in his country.

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the reason for this enthusiasm about being 'written up'. 'At last', he said, 'someone will know about us.' He went on to speak with regret about the old days when one or two missionaries and others really knew about the Ngoni and could speak their language. He then spoke with bitterness about the present, lamenting that the Ngoni were no longer regarded as a great people. Gradually it became evident that the Ngoni, being very conscious themselves of their distinctive cultural identity, and of their positive achievements in setting up the Ngoni state, expect other people to recognize this too. They keep constantly before them memories of their past greatness, and they dwell gloomily on the coming of the Europeans which marked the end of their ascendancy.

IV. The Historical Sense of the Ngoni. From the beginning of my stay among the Ngoni the chiefs and leading men impressed on me the importance of knowing about their past. In each area the Paramount Chief arranged that 'historians', that is, old men accredited by him as having correct information, should come to dictate Ngoni history to me. At first this relating of history took place in public before any who liked to listen. The old historians, however, grizzled warriors of many fights, trembled and stammered in giving their accounts, because the Paramount Chief so impressed on them the importance of the occasion, and pulled them up sharply when they hesitated over names or events. At the subsequent private sittings, where the old men could argue fiercely with each other without any fear of causing shame before an audience, the accounts were much more coherent, and, as the Paramount Chief assured me, correct. After one such taking down of history in the Paramount's village, I went to stay in the village of one of these 'historians', a very much respected *mulumuzana* and one of the 'best families'. He gently but firmly put aside my scheme of studying village organization and economic life, saying, 'First you ought to know about our beginnings'.[1] After giving me still more detailed accounts of Ngoni history, he explained that though much of their social life was mixed up to-day with that of other tribes, their history and traditions were distinct and belonged to them alone. Hence I ought to have it written

[1] He used the verb *kudauka*, which implies root or origin.

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history in order to prove their unity with the true Ngoni. It is nevertheless recognized that the aristocrats, through their kinship links with the past, have the best knowledge; the rest listen and defer to them. For matters relating to history are no antiquarian interest to the Ngoni. It is probable that recalling history and dwelling on the great days of the past is to some extent a compensation for what the Ngoni consider the indignities of their position to-day. Yet it is also a stimulus to them to maintain their separate identity and to revere their institutions. Tradition supports rank, by recognizing the historical importance of certain clans; and rank preserves tradition because intimate knowledge is the proud monopoly of certain families.

V. TRADITION AND LEGEND AS DOCUMENTATION. To the anthropologist who examines the part played by tradition and legend in the culture of a people, Professor Malinowski has given an invaluable lead. He suggests that myths are the charter and documentation for traditional tribal life, 'statements of reality which live in the institutions and pursuits of the people';[1] and that legend is re-interpreted history. All peoples of whatever level of civilization interpret history in the light of their beliefs about themselves, their achievements, and their destiny. The Ngoni are no exception to this. Sometimes they relate factual history which is verifiable and accurate. At other times it is probably part fact, part fiction. Yet at all times the emphasis in, and interpretation of, tradition, has a definite purpose, and it is possible to see how a standardized form of a narrative has come to be accepted and believed in. The version of a narrative at one time was interpreted or moulded to serve a purpose. Having been established, it then moulds the thinking of the people on that particular issue. The vexed question of the supremacy of the two Paramounts, Mpezeni and Mwambera[2] is a case in point. The basis of the story of the original dispute is the same, but the versions as told in each 'country' differ in a succession of minute details, whose arrangement and emphasis prove the point in each case. Mpezeni's historians have arranged the details to prove that he is the rightful *inkosi*; Mwambera's historians

[1] B. Malinowski. Article on Culture in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*.

[2] The two Paramounts at present holding these titles are grandsons of the first holders, to whom I refer as old Mpezeni.

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returned between the years 1855–1865, to settle in their present habitat. The earlier part of the period was one of exploring and of conquest. The later part was the time of settlement and consolidation, during which the Ngoni 'states' emerged in the form in which they were found, when the Europeans first arrived.

The Ngoni in Mpezeni's country, when speaking of this time, call it *chamtendere* (the time of peace). Any white travellers' tales referring to these years lay stress on the constant raids carried out by the Ngoni, the fierceness of their warriors, and their ravaging of the countryside for slaves and cattle. It was obviously a time of frequent wars. Why then do the Ngoni call it a time of peace? I have asked this question of many men of rank and standing and they give one invariable reply, 'We call it *chamtendere* because the *Azungu* (Europeans) were not there to trouble us'. This statement is in effect the key to Ngoni thinking about the days of pre-white contact, and also about the advent of the Europeans. The way in which they speak of *chamtendere* is itself significant. I first heard it during a long recital of Ngoni history, and stopped the narrator to ask the meaning of the word. There was instantly an embarrassed silence and self-conscious grins in the group. The word had evidently slipped out unawares, for later on they told me that it was a word they only used among themselves. Having once been used, however, it appeared frequently in conversations with me, and proved a useful starting-point for accounts of the organization of their own state and the effects on it of the European advent. 'Ah, *chamtendere*', they say, with a deep sigh, 'then we were people'. It proved also to be a pass-word to their confidence, for whenever I mentioned *chamtendere* to a village headman, he and his notables nudged each other, and laughed and said, 'She can know about us'. When pressed to be more specific about this 'troubling' by the *Azungu* they spoke of taxes, of the ban upon raiding and warfare, of young men being called away to work, of their land being taken for European farms. These restrictions and disabilities caused by white contact they regarded as warfare, that is, as troubled times, because the Europeans forcibly prevented them from doing as they liked, just as they had done in their day to the surrounding tribes. The conquered tribes, on the other hand, naturally hailed the advent of the Europeans as a time of peace and security. Therein lies the chief

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occasion on which he made known any new laws before the assembled leaders of his country. The ceremony was marked by special songs and dances performed only at that time. It was an occasion on which economics, religion, politics, social life and recreation were brought together in a dramatic form in the part played by the Paramount Chief *vis-à-vis* his people. When speaking of these ' good old days ' the Ngoni always refer to the *Inqwala*, for it was to them symbolic of the greatness of their *Inkosi*, and of how ' they lived well ' before the *Azungu* came as despoilers.

On the subject of warfare and of training for war the Ngoni will talk for hours. Among the many things which they mourn in the passing of the old order, they regret most the military training of youths and men, and the age-grade system which was part of it. They point out how a youth had his appointed companions to whom he stood in a recognized relationship of mutual obligation and assistance, and with these companions he went through the grades of calf-herding and cattle-herding until he graduated into a regiment. The field worker can observe how much Ngoni ' national feeling ' was bound up with memories of war days, when to-day they put on their war dress and dance war dances at a chief's village. I have seen Chewa men and women huddle together during these war dances, and mutter, ' Too many Ngoni are here ', as if they were still in the days of fighting and raids, while the Ngoni warriors swagger about, swishing their kilts of skins and brandishing their shields and spears with every appearance of reality. I have heard accounts of Ngoni raids for cattle going as far as the Kafue River, into the Mashukulumbwe country, given with such details of the places on the march that I think they must be substantially correct. Even if it is legendary, the recital of such raids still fosters Ngoni pride and distinction, and I have heard an old man who took part in such a raid compare it scornfully with young men going nowadays to Broken Hill and the Copper Belt. ' They go only for money ', he said, ' We went for our *izidlodlo*[1] and for cattle to honour the *inkosi* '.

The Ngoni are realists and they admit that while they planted their institutions in the country and maintained most of them, at the same time a measure of adjustment was going on to the local cultures. For

[1] Head-ring, the sign of a warrior ready to marry.

177 184 one Ngoni area to another, and it is evident that they are well aware that they met with different kinds of white contact. A frequent topic of discussion in villages is the differences between the administration of N. Rhodesia and of Nyasaland, as well as the policy and attitudes of the different missions.

177 There is, however, one common factor in the situation called culture contact, existing wherever the Ngoni meet any Europeans. ●186 Like the Zulu, the Ngoni do not necessarily take kindly to white ways nor desire to make an extensive imitation of white culture. Their racial and cultural pride makes them cling to their own institutions and resent the assertion of white superiority in every sphere of life. This is evident in material culture as well as in the realm of political and social values. The Ngoni are well known for their skill in house-[342] building, yet they prefer their own of poles and mud, and are slow to take to brick houses. Their houses, both in the villages and on the copper mines, were noticeably bare of ' store goods ', and their expenditure on clothes and ' trash ' is low in comparison with the wages earned. Their standards of hospitality, of courtesy, and of mutual assistance they believe to be much superior to the Europeans. They carried on their own system of courts by themselves until it was [692] recognized by the Native Courts Ordinance a few years ago, and they speak with scorn of the chief who cannot decide his own cases and has to have recourse to the Boma. Several times in the villages, when describing their agricultural methods, or hygiene for young men, or moral training of children, they have said to me, ' Write that we knew this before the *Azungu* came '.

On one count they do concede superiority to the Europeans. 'Only 186 in war the *Azungu* knew better ', and that to the Ngoni was the acid 726 test. In Mpezeni's and Gomani's countries, where they were conquered by force of arms, they knew they had to yield as they had made others yield in their day. Yet even here they find a cause for pride. ' No one ever conquered us until the *Azungu* came, and no one will conquer us again until they first conquer the *Azungu*.' This I have had said to me many times by men when speaking of their experiences as carriers and as *askari* in the East African campaign. They add as explanation, ' We went to the war of the Germans because the Boma said we should go. But we wanted also to see if the English would

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conquer the Germans as they conquered us.' The Ngoni are by no means unaware of white political antagonism and questioned me closely about present day relations between English and Germans, and between English and Dutch in South Africa. Though they have seen from their own observation that modern warfare as practised by Europeans is entirely different from warfare as they knew it, they are nevertheless interested in war to-day as an 'instrument of national policy'.

It is from this angle that the Ngoni in Mpezeni's country regard the 'war' between them and the British in 1898. It was a trial of strength; they were defeated by superior power.[1] When the Ngoni tell the story of this war they make it clear that just as they had defeated the other tribes with their superior weapons, so it was British superiority in weapons which won the day, because their machine-guns were used with deadly force on the Ngoni warriors. The version of the fighting current in the villages was told me many times, always with a note of awe and horror at the unexpected and overwhelming catastrophe. When the British punitive force camped outside Mpezeni's kraal, the Ngoni war *induna* sent to ask if they were ready to fight. The reply was, 'Wait, the *Azungu* are eating'. Another later messenger brought back word that the *Azungu* had finished breakfast and were ready, and the companies sallied out, and the machine-guns were arranged facing the kraal exit. Then the Ngoni warriors sprang out, holding their shields before them, and were met by a hail of fire from the machine-guns. To their horror they found their invincible shields were no longer a protection. Many fell, the rest fled, and the huge village[2] was looted and burned. 'The *Azungu* war was too strong', is the way they invariably end this often repeated tale.

Overwhelming though this military catastrophe was, to the Ngoni it is the events preceding and following the 'war' on which they dwell, when in the villages they speak of this period of white contact. 'We are not ashamed for the war', they say, 'We are ashamed for losing our cattle and our land'. They tell to this day how a certain Carl Weise, a German, came up from Portuguese East Africa trading,[3]

[1] In the Report of Justice Maughan on the North Charterland Inquiry he says, 'It was a remarkably well-managed little war and the Ngoni accepted their defeat in good spirit like other Bantu races'.

[2] Over 3 miles across.

[3] in 1885.

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work in Southern Rhodesia and the Union. This exodus to the south in its turn brought the Ngoni into touch once more with the Matabele, the Zulu, and the Swazi, and reawakened their consciousness of their southern origin. It is significant that just at the point when their power in their own country received a crushing blow, they came into contact once more in the south with the stock from which they had sprung and to whom they could still speak in their own language. The anthropologist who looks for the reason why the distinctive Ngoni culture did not die out entirely after their military defeat and the advent of the whites, can see at least part of the reason supplied by the results of this economic exodus to work in the south. When the other tribes in the neighbourhood were, in the Ngoni phrase, 'running always to the Boma' and incidentally picking up fragments of European customs, the Ngoni remained, according to their own account, to a great extent aloof and were strengthened in this aloofness by their renewed southern connexions.

Ngoni supremacy over the country was at an end. The Europeans were the overlords of all the tribes, not the Ngoni. Instead of one big chief in the country, many small ones were now recognized who dared to give themselves airs because they knew the Ngoni could not compel allegiance to their Paramount. Chewa people living under Ngoni chiefs could no longer be forced to stay there, therefore a different attitude towards them was necessary. 'Chewa' could no longer be synonymous with 'slave'. I have heard Ngoni chiefs in court address their *indunas* and headmen many times on behaving well to people of other tribes 'Or they will leave us and to-day we cannot make them return'. A recent case in which a young chief, but a very important one, was summoned to the Paramount's court for insulting a Chewa woman, was made the occasion by the Paramount for a long public discourse on the present relations between Ngoni and Chewa, pointing out that an Ngoni chief whose Chewa subjects left him would 'spoil his country' and 'all his people would be ashamed'. Ngoni prestige, in fact, having lost the support of military power, had to rely on other sanctions. In their own eyes, their prestige was still due to their southern origin, their success in creating the Ngoni state in an alien milieu, and those distinctive institutions which they had retained. To the surrounding people, to the Chewa and other tribes,

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Ngoni prestige depended partly on the very effective justice meted out in the courts,[1] and also on the unquestioning allegiance of all subordinate authorities to the Paramount Chief. A Chewa Paramount Chief told me that he envied the power and prestige of the Ngoni Paramount, ' because all his chiefs obey him ', and there is undoubtedly a widespread admiration among the less united local tribes for the centralized political organization of Ngoni, and the fact that they can hold a large area and many people together as an effective unit.

The Ngoni, therefore, in the course of the last thirty-five years have to a large extent made the adjustments necessary to their changed relations with the local peoples. They have accepted the new situation *de facto*, though they do not necessarily acquiesce in heart. They still think they are due a unique position among the tribes, and for this reason they dwell continually on the glories of *chamtendere*. Nor does the adoption of some measure of European ways reconcile them to a different attitude. Even educated Ngoni teachers and ministers have said to me with deep regret, ' We are ashamed because we are being ignored to-day by other tribes '.

Their attitude towards Europeans is also partly based on the European failure to accord them a unique position among the tribes, or at least to acknowledge their former unique position. This, to them, is a cause for feeling ashamed. They are ashamed too because the land, except in the Reserves, is no longer theirs, and they have to submit to taxation. ' To pay taxes, that is our war to-day ', and something of the old martial spirit is evident in the young men who successfully evade the tax collectors, where the tax is collected directly by the Government, as in Mpezeni's country. In Gomani's country, on the other hand, where taxes are collected through the chiefs and headmen, though the men groan at having to find the money, they do not attempt to evade it, first because it would be useless, and secondly because they acknowledge the right of the chiefs to collect dues from them.

Any generalization about the Ngoni attitude to white people would be inaccurate without much detailed explanation, for which there is no space here. It is true though, I think, that at least in Mpezeni's country and possibly in the others, too, the Ngoni have not yet willingly made

[1] It is said that it is useless to bribe Ngoni chiefs and councillors.

hitherto been the chief sanction for Ngoni supremacy. With their invincibility gone, the regiments broke up and the Ngoni military prestige was at an end. At the same time the direction of political affairs and the relations between the different tribes was assumed by a superior power. Ngoni political ascendancy and their control of economic organization was also at an end. The subject races of the Ngoni who had hitherto either been conquered or submitted voluntarily to the Ngoni had now an ally who was stronger than their former masters.

3. The new situation forced the Ngoni to make drastic readjustments. They had to readjust themselves to new relations with other tribes, and at the same time to the Europeans. In their contact with the Chewa and other subject tribes they could no longer maintain the social exclusiveness which had marked the distinction between Ngoni and slaves. There was therefore less actual resistance to culture fusion, though the dislike of adopting alien customs persisted. This dislike of alien customs was evident to some extent also in white contacts. The missionaries brought a new religion, western education, and western medicine. Other Europeans introduced land reserves, taxation, and working for wages. To the local tribes the European represented security as well as certain material benefits. To the Ngoni these material benefits appeared less welcome in the face of their defeat. There was therefore a psychological conflict set up among the Ngoni —a malaise due to their military and political downfall, together with their determination to preserve certain elements in their own culture. That psychological conflict is evident everywhere to-day, and finds expression in all conversations which turn on the relations of the Ngoni to other tribes or to Europeans. To the persistence of that conflict is due the strength of Ngoni 'national feeling', which has directed the selective process by which some of their political, legal, and social institutions have survived the results of culture contact.

4. Conditions all over Africa are changing and new forms of social and political organization are emerging due to the contact of the Africans with European civilization. What place has the Ngoni state in this emergent African society? Are there still cultural realities in Ngoni society which should be preserved, and can the Ngoni political structure be galvanized into new life through the medium of Indirect

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132 84° F. and the mean minimum 61·5° F.[1] Three seasons are distinguished: the wet season, from the beginning of November until about April; the cold season, from May until July; and the hot season, from August until the rains begin again. Most of the planting takes [241] place in the first half of the wet season, and the harvest comes after the rains have ceased. There is very little fishing, but antelopes, leopards, 224 wild pig, and buck are hunted for their meat, and lions, leopards, 136 hyenas, and monkeys on account of the damage they do to crops and livestock. The greater part of the region is free enough from tsetse fly to permit cattle-keeping, and for the tribe as a whole there is approxi- [231] mately one head of cattle to every two people. Pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens are also kept.

171 The material culture of the tribe is similar to that of their neigh- 342 bours. They live in one- or two-roomed huts of bamboo or pole and 323 mud; some women make pottery and some men make reed mats; 285 all buy their clothes and their hoes from the shops.[2]

197 Three languages are used in the region: Ci-Ngoni, a language akin to Zulu, is now heard only in songs and royal praises; Ci-Nyanja is taught in the schools and is used for communication with Europeans and Indians; while the normal language used every day in the villages is a dialect of Ci-Nsenga.

I. THE STATE

Old Administrative System

● 186 The Ngoni think of themselves as different from their neighbours 619 because of their chieftainship. The other tribes do not, in the eyes 642 of the Ngoni, possess the same kind of pyramidal and centralized organization which was characteristic of the régime of Mpezeni I and which persists in a modified form at the present time.

619 The important positions in the old political structure were occupied 631 by members of the royal lineage, their queens, the regional governors,[3] 554 and the lieutenants.[4] The political system was at the same time the territorial system, residence being determined by political allegiance. The pattern of residence and allegiance persisted despite the movement of the tribe as a whole from one region to another and despite

[1] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 2–3.
[2] See my *Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni*.
[3] *Mulumuzana*, pl. *olumuzana*.
[4] *Ndunа*, pl. *amа*.

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The Yao are mistrusted more than any other tribe, and some of the decisions taken by the courts are harsh on Yao. For example, a Yao man who was married to an Ngoni woman had, it was alleged, caught venereal disease from his wife. His wife then applied to the courts for a divorce, which was granted, together with the custody of the children. No bride-wealth had been paid in the marriage, but the husband now offered to pay in order to retain the children. This bride-wealth was refused by the woman's parents. The Yao appealed, but the judgement was upheld, and in addition he was ordered to go back to Nyasaland at once. He asked for permission to return to the woman's village in order to collect his belongings, and this was granted by the court, after first securing agreement between the couple as to the extent of his possessions, to wit, four plates and two beds. This deportation order was made despite the fact that the Yao had been living with his wife for twenty-one years. If a man of some other tribe had been involved, it is unlikely that he would have been ordered to leave the country, nor would the court have been so suspicious of his trying to take away more than his rightful share of the household possessions.

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A Yao, who had a good job in Fort Jameson, once offered 30*l.* to the Paramount Chief when he was in the town as the legalization payment for a woman of the royal lineage whom he wished to marry. The Paramount Chief refused the money on the ground that the man was a Yao and he was not going to permit Yao to marry into the royal lineage, despite the protest of one of his lieutenants that the Yao was just a man like anyone else.

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The reason that is given for this dislike of Yao is that they are sexually very virile, due to the medicines that they possess for increasing potency. It is perhaps significant that the same is said of Indians, who are also disliked. The Yao are known among the Ngoni for their great knowledge of medicines of all kinds, and the allegation of unnatural sexual vigour may be a rationalization of the fear that the Yao may practise sorcery among the families into which they marry. Another factor that may operate is that the Yao are the only tribe in the region that the Ngoni cannot claim to have conquered.

Political Relations with Other Tribes

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Before the European conquest relations between the Ngoni and other tribes were principally those of raiders and raided. The great season for raiding was after the harvest, when the surrounding tribes

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

101 [175] ardly people compared with the wild spirits who remained under Mombera.

This tribe is variously named Mazitu, Vikoko, Abangoni, and so on, and readers of Livingstone's 'Zambezi and its Tributaries,' will remember his frequent references to the wild marauding bands of Mazitu. The word Abangoni, by which the tribe calls itself, [186] simply means "The people." They reckon themselves the blooded aristocrats of Africa.

[193] The prefix *aba* before ngoni, is simply the plural form of the noun *umgoni*, a single man. The country is called Ubungoni, and the language Chingoni. For the peculiarity of the Bantu languages, is that words alter their number from singular to plural, and character from noun to adjective, not by changing the suffix but the prefix.

197 The language which the Ngoni speak is a slight modification of Zulu—but they only use two clicks—the dental *c* and labial *q*. In our schools therefore we use the Zulu literature in which there are already nearly 40 volumes, and the best of these are the translations left by Bishop Colenso. Zulu is however rapidly dying [567] out, as the language of the slaves and of the surrounding tribes is becoming the vernacular of the common people. When Mombera's 175 Ngoni settled down in the watershed of the Ruhuru, they soon made their presence disagreeably felt throughout West Nyasa. [926] Their marauding parties were always out on the war path. Dressing in a frightsome garb of cock feathers, carrying a large shield and two or three stabbing assegais, they terrorised the neighbouring tribes. They used to sleep near some village which they wished to attack, and then in the early morning just before the light had come, with a wild war whoop they would sweep through the village, killing the men and the old people; then when they had seized the women and children and tied them together they would start back for the hills, driving with them all the cattle and sheep and goats that they could find. Their fighting was never done in the open. It generally took the form of a wild and sudden rush, and in a moment bleeding corpses were lying about, and the village was in flames.

The terrified people betook themselves to huge stockaded villages, [101] others piled their villages in the lake itself. The Poka, and Henga fled to mountain fastnesses, and built on the edges of fearful precipices, the Senga fled to the Luangwa marsh and built great protected villages in the depths of huge thorn thickets. And the land became